

Message Text

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SUBJECT: STOLTENBERG'S UPCOMING VISIT TO MOSCOW AND
PROBLEMS IN THE NORTH

1. IN CONVERSATIONS WITH HIGH-LEVEL STATE DEPARTMENT
OFFICIALS NOVEMBER 12, FOREIGN MINISTRY UNDERSECRETARY
SHED NEW LIGHT ON ANNUAL SOVIET-NOREGIAN POLITICAL
CONSULTATIONS AT UNDER SECRETARY LEVEL AND STOLTENBERG'S
PLANNED TRIP TO MOSCOW NOVEMBER 19 FOR TALKS WITH DEPUTY
FOREIGN MINISTER ZEMSKOV.

2. LAST SUCH ANNUAL CONSULTATIONS WERE HELD IN 1973.
STOLTENBERG SPECULATED THAT REASONS FOR SOVIET RELUCTANCE
TO HOLD BILATERAL DISCUSSIONS SINCE THEN WERE SOVIET
PERCEPTIONS OF HOSTILE POLITICAL ATTITUDES AND PUBLIC
OPINION IN NORWAY AND FACT THAT SOVIETS HAD NOTHING TO
OFFER IN WAY OF COMPROMISE TOWARD NORWEGIAN POSITIONS.

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3. STOLTENBERG SAID NORWEGIANS HOPED TO PUT OFF FOURTH ROUND OF BOUNDARY NEGOTIATIONS, NOW SCHEDULED FOR NOVEMBER 22 IN OSLO, UNTIL AFTER HE VISITED MOSCOW BUT THAT NORWEGIAN REQUEST FOR POSTPONEMENT IS 'STILL UNDER CONSIDERATION' BY SOVIETS.

4. NORWEGIANS REGARD BOUNDARY DISPUTE AS MOST SERIOUS OUTSTANDING BILATERAL ISSUE WITH RUSSIANS AND DO NOT FORESEE ANY SOFTENING IN SOVIET POSITION. MAIN NORWEGIAN FEAR IS NOT MORE TEST FIRINGS INTO BARENTS SEA -- THAT'S BORING STOLTENBERG SAID -- BUT PROSPECT THAT SOVIETS WILL BEGIN EXPLORATION FOR OIL AND GAS IN DISPUTED ZONE. STOLTENBERG SEES WORST CASE AS ACTUAL SOVIET DISCOVERY OF RESOURCES IN THIS AREA.

5. TWO MAIN PURPOSES OF NOVEMBER 29 CONSULTATIONS WITH ZEMSKOV, ARE (A) EXPLORATION ON POLITICAL LEVEL TO SEE IF REAL BASIS EXISTS FOR FURTHER BOUNDARY TALKS AND GENERATE MOVEMENT IN THAT DIRECTION, AND (B) LAY FOUNDATION FOR GROMYKO-FRYDENLUND OSLO BILATERAL WHICH STOLTENBERG SAID SHOULD HAVE OCCURRED IN OCTOBER.

6. NORWEGIAN UNDER SECRETARY COMPLAINED ABOUT PUBLICITY NORTHERN PROBLEMS ARE RECEIVING AND INFLUX OF JOURNALISTS FROM ALL OVER THE GLOBE. THIS FOCUSES ATTENTION ON SVOLBERD/ BOUNDARY ISSUES, SENSATIONALIZES DEVELOPMENTS, AND GENERATES ANTI-SOVIET PUBLIC OPINION IN NORWAY TO THE EXTENT THAT TENSIONS ARE RISING AND NORWEGIAN-SOVIET RELATIONS ARE BEING ADVERSELY AFFECTED. MINISTRY, HE SAID, IS ACTIVELY GRAPPLING WITH PROBLEM OF HOW TO DEFUSE PUBLIC INTEREST AND PUSH NORTHERN ISSUES OUT OF LIMELIGHT. KISSINGER

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